

Message Text

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TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

FOLLOWING IS ADVANCE TEXT OF UPI "FOREIGN NEWS COMMENTARY"
BY JOHN A. CALLCOTT, DATED LINE GENEVA, TO APPEAR
DECEMBER 29. BEGIN TEXT:

1. THE RHODESIA CONFERENCE ENDED AS IT BEGAN -- IN TOTAL
DEADLOCK BETWEEN BLACKS AND WHITES WITH BRITAIN UNABLE TO
DUCK HER LAST MAJOR COLONIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

2. IN FACT IT WAS NOT A CONFERENCE AT ALL. IT WAS TWO
MONTHS OF BRITAIN'S AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
IVOR RICHARD, SEEKING IN PRIVATE MEETINGS TO FIND SOME
COMMON GROUND AMONG THE RIVAL BLACK CONTENDERS FOR POWER
WHEN RHODESIA COMES UNDER MAJORITY AFRICAN RULE.

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3. IT BEGAN IN SEPTEMBER WHEN HENRY KISSINGER, AS HIS
LAST BIG INITIATIVE AS U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE, PRODUCED
PROPOSALS FOR A PEACEFUL SWITCH FROM WHITE MINORITY TO
BLACK MAJORITY RULE IN THE BREAKAWAY BRITISH COLONY.

4. WITH BRITISH BACKING, KISSINGER PROPOSED A TWO-YEAR TR-

ANSITION PERIOD WITH BLACKS AND WHITES ON EQUAL TERMS TO
DRAFT A NEW CONSTITUTION AND SHARE CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY
UNTIL INDEPENDENCE DAY.

5. BUT IT WAS NOT NEARLY AS SIMPLE AS THAT AS BRITAIN
FOUND OUT AS SOON AS IT FORMALLY OPENED THE CONFERENCE ON
OCT. 28.

6. RHODESIAN PREMIER IAN SMITH REFUSED TO DISCUSS
ANYTHING EXCEPT THE KISSINGER PLAN -- WHICH WOULD HAVE
ALLOWED THE WHITES TO MAINTAIN THE CRUCIAL DEFENSE AND
SECURITY MINISTRIES.

7. THE FOUR BLACK NATIONALIST LEADERS INVITED BY BRITAIN
FOR THEIR PART WERE OPENLY SCORNFUL OF EACH OTHER IN
PUBLIC WHILE HOSTILE IN THEIR FORMAL POSITION PAPERS.

8. BISHOP ABEL MUZOREWA, THE NATIONALIST WITH THE WIDEST
BLACK SUPPORT IN RHODESIA, DEMANDED IMMEDIATE ELECTIONS
TO PICK AN INTERIM PRIME MINISTER.

9. NDABANINGI SITHOLE WANTED A TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT
OF ALL NATIONALIST LEADERS TO ENSURE HIMSELF A PLACE
NEAR THE TOP.

10. MILITANT ROBERT MUGABE AND THE MORE MODERATE JOSHUA
NKOMO, UNEASY AND RIVAL PARTNERS IN A "PATRIOTIC FRONT,"
ARGUED FOR IMMEDIATE POWER WITHOUT ELECTIONS.

11. BUT ALL THE BLACK LEADERS AGREED ON ONE POINT -- THAT
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BRITAIN AS THE COLONIAL POWER SHOULD PLAY A DIRECT
SUPERVISORY ROLE.

12. SMITH SAID HE WANTS NO SUCH BRITISH PRESENCE AND MADE
NO EFFORT TO HIDE HIS BELIEF THAT "BRITAIN HAS SOLD US
DOWN THE DRAIN," AS HE PUT IT IN A PRIVATE CONVERSATION.

13. BUT AS WAS RECOGNIZED FROM THE OUTSET, BRITAIN HAS
TO BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN RHODESIA IF TOTAL WAR
BETWEEN WHITES AND BLACKS, AS WELL AS BETWEEN THE RIVAL
BLACK FACTIONS, IS TO BE PREVENTED.

14. "AS A MATTER OF FACT WHAT WE ARE REALLY DOING NOW
IS TRYING TO GET THE BEST DEAL POSSIBLE ON BEHALF OF
THE WHITES AND IN THE INTERESTS OF THE BLACKS ALTHOUGH
MR. SMITH WOULD NEVER ADMIT IT," IS HOW ONE HIGH BRITISH
PARTICIPANT CONCEDED AFTER IT BECAME OBVIOUS THAT NO ONE
WOULD SIGN THE KISSINGER PLAN AND GO HOME.

15. APART FROM SIMPLY SETTING UP THE CONFERENCE, ISSUING THE INVITATIONS AND PROVIDING THE CHAIRMAN AND SECRETARIAT, BRITISH INVOLVEMENT CAME RELUCTANTLY.

16. THE FIRST CONCESSION CAME WHEN RICHARD GAVE IN TO DEMANDS BY MUGABE AND NKOMO THAT BRITAIN FIX A DEFINITE DATE FOR MAJORITY RULE INDEPENDENCE. IT TOOK THREE WEEKS BEFORE RICHARD MANAGED TO OBTAIN AGREEMENT FROM PRIME MINISTER JAMES CALLAGHAN TO SET MARCH 1, 1978, AS THE DEADLINE -- WITH MAJORITY RULE EARLIER IF POSSIBLE.

17. ALMOST TOTALLY IGNORING THE WHITE DELEGATION -- "WE KNOW THEIR LINE ANYWAY" -- THE BRITISH THEN HAD TO BRING IN THE NATIONALIST LEADERS INDIVIDUALLY TO TONE DOWN THEIR BIDS FOR POWER.

18. AND THE ONLY CONSENSUS AMONG THE BLACK DELEGATION
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CHIEFS WAS THAT BRITAIN MUST HAVE A SUPERVISING COMMISSIONER OR GOVERNOR IN SALISBURY TO MAINTAIN PEACE AND ORDER DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD.

19. AT THIS POINT RICHARD HAD TO GO BACK TO LONDON TO SEEK NEW INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDANCE FROM THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT -- WHILE TAKING THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONSULT WITH KISSINGER, WHO FOR HIS PART MADE IT PLAIN THAT WHILE HAVING INITIATED THE CONFERENCE, THE UNITED STATES FEELS BRITAIN BEARS ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY.

20. RICHARD RETURNED TO THE CONFERENCE ON SUNDAY, DEC. 12 AND SAID BRITAIN HAD "NEW IDEAS" BUT THEY HAVE YET TO BE PUT INTO FORMAL WRITTEN FORM.

21. BRITAIN IS PREPARED TO PLAY A "DIRECT ROLE" IN RHODESIA, HE SAID.

22. HOW FAR THIS ROLE GOES WILL BE OUTLINED WHEN THE CONFERENCE RESUMES AFTER A ONE-MONTH BREAK. BUT HE SAID ANY DEPLOYMENT OF BRITISH TROOPS IN RHODESIA TO KEEP THE PEACE SHOULD BE RULED OUT.

23. THIS, HOWEVER, MAY WELL BE THE LAST RELUCTANT MOVE FACING BRITAIN.

END OF TEXT.

ROBINSON

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